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# The Bureaucratic SALT

By ROBERT L. BARTLEY

Secretary of State Kissinger will be flying off to Moscow, perhaps as soon as this coming weekend, in an effort to firm up a second strategic arms pact with the Soviet Union. In doing so, he is brushing off both Soviet activities in Angola and charges by former U.S. defense officials that the Soviets are cheating on the first arms pact.

Some of these charges were detailed in an article in this space on December 19. Its theme was that the Soviets have been exhibiting shyster-like behavior on SALT-I, which concerns easily monitored things like huge missile silos, and that thus it would be foolish to rely on SALT-II to limit their deployment of small and elusive cruise missiles.

To the charges of Soviet misbehavior, Secretary Kissinger offers a fundamentally bureaucratic answer: government officialdom agrees there are no "violations," so forget it. Even at this late date in Mr. Kissinger's career such arguments apparently impress some people, at least to judge by a column in The Washington Post by Stephen S. Rosenfeld. So a few words are needed on Dr. Kissinger and the bureaucracy.

Specifically, Secretary Kissinger assures us that in the Verification Panel, a high-level inter-agency group on SALT, all decisions have been unanimous. In fact, the Verification Panel is a discussion and bargaining forum; whether there is any meaningful sense in which it makes decisions is a moot question. Certainly it does not operate by voting, as Mr. Kissinger's phraseology suggests. What actually happens there might be understood by studying the way SALT-I was negotiated, as described by John Newhouse in "Cold Dawn," a book written on information probably supplied with Mr. Kissinger's authorization.

One issue stalling the SALT-I negotiations was submarine-launched ballistic missiles; the U.S. had a numerical lead but the Soviets were building rapidly. In April 1972, Mr. Kissinger, then President Nixon's security advisor, flew off to Moscow, so secretly that even the head of the U.S. SALT delegation did not know he was there. In those meetings Soviet Party Chairman Brezhnev said submarines could be included in the agreement if the Soviets were allowed 62 submarines with 950 missiles, compared with the then-existing U.S. total of 41 submarines and 658 missiles.

A Verification Panel meeting had been scheduled for April 28. One conceivable way to proceed would have been to put the Soviet offer on the table for discussion and decision, unanimous or otherwise. Instead, Mr. Kissinger pondered the problem of how to move what Mr. Newhouse describes as a "deal worked out" from the "back channel" into the "front channel." Mr. Kissinger ordered a briefing paper on what submarine numbers the Russians "might propose" (italics from the original). The mid-range number turned out to be 62 submarines and 950 missiles. The meeting was convened, Mr. Newhouse reports, "some, though probably not all of the principals knew that Brezhnev had put

In the meeting Mr. Kissinger bargained with Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Pentagon wanted a speed-up of development of new Trident submarines, and Mr. Kissinger asked how many boats the Russians would have without an agreement by 1978, when the first Tridents could be ready. The answer was 80, and Mr. Kissinger said the agreement should hold them to a lower number. Mr. Newhouse reports, "The meaning of the exchange between Kissinger and Moorer was clear to those who heard it. The Navy would have Trident, assuming Congressional approval, and the President would have the support of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for an SLBM deal that gave the Soviets nearly half again as many missile-carrying submarines as the United States."

Arguably, the Verification Panel was indeed the site of a budget decision on the Trident program. But the SALT deal had already been "worked out" between Mr. Kissinger and Secretary Brezhnev. Mr. Kissinger concealed this information from the Verification Panel as he bargained with and manipulated its members to win their acquiescence to the Soviet proposals.

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Now comes Secretary Kissinger to point to "unanimous" Verification Panel decisions as a reason for confidence in the judgments of government officialdom.

That the issue of Soviet compliance with SALT-I has been treated in a similar fashion can scarcely be doubted by anyone who reads the documents recently released by Congressman Pike's Select Committee on Intelligence. A 1973 memo to the acting director of the CIA from Edward W. Proctor, deputy director for intelligence, complains that 24 days after detection of a possible violation, the information was still being withheld from, among others, Secretary of State Rogers the head of our SALT delegation, and our representative to the Standing Consultative Commission, the Soviet-American body that deals with possible violations.

"A principal reason for establishment of the 'hold' on this information was to insure that there be no leakage while the Soviets were being queried on the matter," the memo reads. In short, Mr. Kissinger was again keeping U.S. officials ignorant while he tried to strike a bargain with the Russians. The CIA concern over Mr. Kissinger's habit of withholding information is "get concrete assurance from Dr. Kissinger that the President is aware of the decision to withhold this information from key

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have violated any of the SALT agreements. If the Director believes that the Soviets may be in violation, this should be the subject of a memorandum from him to Dr. Kissinger. The judgment that a violation is considered to have occurred is one that will be made at the NSC level."

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To be fair, the words "NSC level" could in practice mean Mr. Kissinger's personal NSC staff, or they could mean the official members of the National Security Council. Dr. Kissinger has said that there is "no memorandum" by department heads or chiefs of staff raising "any of the issues" recently discussed. This is spectacularly untrue in at least one instance, since in his closing days as Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral E. R. Zumwalt sent a personal letter to President Nixon raising, among other things, Soviet compliance with SALT. Before the assembled NSC, the former President dismissed the letter as a "cheap shot."

Members of the NSC scarcely need to be told that the President had staked his political future, and later much of his political survival, on detente and SALT. His treatment of Admiral Zumwalt's letter served to bring home the point: Do not press the compliance issue unless you are prepared to resign.

With the accumulating evidence of withheld information, some Senators have started to worry about whether anything was withheld from them when they ratified the 1972 accords. In particular, some of them are intrigued by Secretary Kissinger's December 9 statement that the Soviet Union has "specifically disavowed" American unilateral statements, particularly the one defining the "heavy" missile limited but left undefined in the formal pact. The Senators would like to know the date of this "specific disavowal," since when ratification was pending Mr. Kissinger mentioned no such thing, though he did point to the terms of the unilateral statement as a "safeguard."

The Soviets have in fact deployed missiles that clearly breach the U.S. definition, in the process increasing their missile throw weight, or lifting power, to an extent other parts of the treaty were intended to preclude. Today, U.S. officialdom does not consider this a violation. The impression U.S. officialdom succeeded in leaving in 1972 is recorded by Mr. Newhouse.

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